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INR WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS
OF DEVELOPMENTS IN HUMAN RIGHTS*

No. 1, April 19, 1977

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Argentina

The Argentine Government acknowledged on April 16 that the army was holding Jacobo Timerman, publisher of the daily La Opinion, for investigation in connection with a scandal linking an Argentine financial group to the Montoneros guerrillas. As of April 17, the whereabouts of the paper's news editor, Enrique Jara, remained a mystery. (UNCLASSIFIED; Reuter 18888, AP NO66)

Meanwhile, Enrique Raab, a journalist formerly employed by the paper, has been abducted from his home by armed men dressed in army uniforms. This brings to four the number of past and present employees of La Opinion kidnapped or arrested in the past two weeks. Production manager Edgardo Sajon disappeared on April 1. (UNCLASSIFIED; Reuter 18888, AP NO66)

The next-of-kin of 425 missing persons petitioned the Argentine Supreme Court on April 11 to investigate the disappearances and the breakdown of the habeas corpus mechanism. A spokesman for the group denied that the US stand on human rights had influenced the petitioners; he said that, on the contrary, the group would have acted sooner had it not feared giving the appearance of conspiring with a foreign power. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE; Buenos Aires 2744)

Prensa of April 7 regretted the recent decline in US-Latin cordiality on account of the human rights controversy. It cited with approval Assistant Secretary Todman's remarks to the effect that certain countries "require special measures to maintain peace and protect the lives and property of citizens." (UNCLASSIFIED; USIS Buenos Aires 111445Z)

* This round-up covers countries receiving development assistance, getting security assistance, or likely to make FMS cash purchases.

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The weekly Correo de la Semana commented on April 13 that US attempts to tie economic aid to the recipient's record on human rights were

--"bound to trigger a furious chain reaction" against Washington; and

--would "work against the Carter-inspired policy of promoting economic and social development." (UNCLASSIFIED; USIS Buenos Aires 141430Z)

At an April 5 meeting between President Videla and General Sumner, the visiting US Chairman of the Inter-American Defense Board, Videla appeared "resigned" to the US rights initiative. He had the air, Embassy Buenos Aires reported, "of a person who feels he has been hurt by an old friend, but not enough to forsake the friendship." (CONFIDENTIAL; Buenos Aires 2595)

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Ecuador

In an exchange with Argentine reporters on April 7, during his visit to Argentina, Ecuadoran Foreign Minister Salvador declared that President Carter's position on human rights, as it applied to Latin America, "requires an adjustment." According to a transcript which he made

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available to Embassy Quito, the Foreign Minister told the reporters that in his opinion:

--President Carter's attempt to put into practice "ethical values of Christian inspiration" reflected in its initial phase "a rigid puritanism"; in its later phases it would probably "more closely approximate reality," thereby ceasing to provoke "confrontation" with Latin America.

--The US is unrealistic to base its foreign policy "entirely on such subjective criteria as human rights." These issues belong more properly to the UN Commission on Human Rights, which regrettably is becoming less of a humanitarian and more of a political organ. (UNCLASSIFIED; Quito 2433)

Argentina and Ecuador, in a joint communique issued on April 5 during Salvador's visit to Buenos Aires, expressed their

"unwavering support for the principle that no country can apply or encourage coercive measures of an economic or political nature to override the sovereign will of another state to obtain advantages or to compel the latter to make decisions of any sort."

Salvador told the press during his visit that Ecuador "viewed with sympathy the complaints which Argentina had made" to the US about human rights. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE; Buenos Aires 2690)

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